

Hebrews Authorship





Hebrews

Issues in Hebrews





AUTHORSHIP

The Greek Title:
To the Hebrews

1. Refers to the ***Recipients***
2. ***Does not follow standard practice***
(General Epistles are normally named after their authors)
3. ***Author not stated*** in the book
4. ***But not anonymous*** to the original readers
(13:18-24)



AUTHORSHIP

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

1. Alexandria (Egypt) & the Eastern Church

➤ **Paul**

2. North African Early Fathers

➤ **Barnabas**

3. Italy & Western Europe

➤ **Initially debated**

➤ **Convinced by Jerome (AD 340-420) & Augustine (AD 354-430) to follow the Eastern Church – i.e. Paul**





AUTHORSHIP

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

4. Reformation Protestants (Calvin, Luther & Erasmus)

➤ **Apollos**

5. Modern Scholarship

➤ **Luke, Clement, Silas, Priscilla,
Philip the Evangelist**





AUTHORSHIP

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Evidence may suggest **Pauline** Authorship:

- Timothy is mentioned (13:23)
- Author imprisoned (13:19)
- Pauline form of closing benediction (13:20-21)
- Greeting from Italian believers (13:24)

All this may suggest Paul wrote it during one of his two imprisonments in Rome (AD 60-62 or AD 67-68)



AUTHORSHIP

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Evidence may suggest **Pauline** Authorship:

- Pauline theme of faith (chap. 11)
- New covenant (chap. 8)
- Israel's example (chap. 4)
- Gifts and power (2:4)
- Person of Christ (chaps. 1–10)

Paul may have omitted his name due to hatred Jews had for him since they thought he maligned the temple and "apostatized" from Judaism to Christianity



AUTHORSHIP

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Opposition to Pauline Authorship

- **More polished** and classical Greek style than the Pauline epistles
- Quoted Old Testament from the **Septuagint** (Greek) not expected of Paul who was trained as a Jew (though Paul does use both translations in his writings)
- **No customary Pauline salutation** at the beginning



AUTHORSHIP

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Opposition to Pauline Authorship

- Paul did not fit the **second generation author** who received the gospel from the disciples of Jesus (2:3-4; cf. Gal. 1–2)
- Emphasis of **priesthood** of Christ and His present work does not fit Paul's writings which emphasize His death and resurrection



AUTHORSHIP

CONCLUSION

"Who it was that really wrote the Epistle, God only knows!"

**–Origen of Alexandria,
3rd century AD**





Rome

**"The believers from Italy send you
their greetings" (13:24b NLT).**

**Where was this
letter written?**

Rome?

Asia Minor?

Cypress?

Israel?

Cyrene?

Where did these
Jews live?



Rome



Cyrene

**Zane Hodges
says Libya**



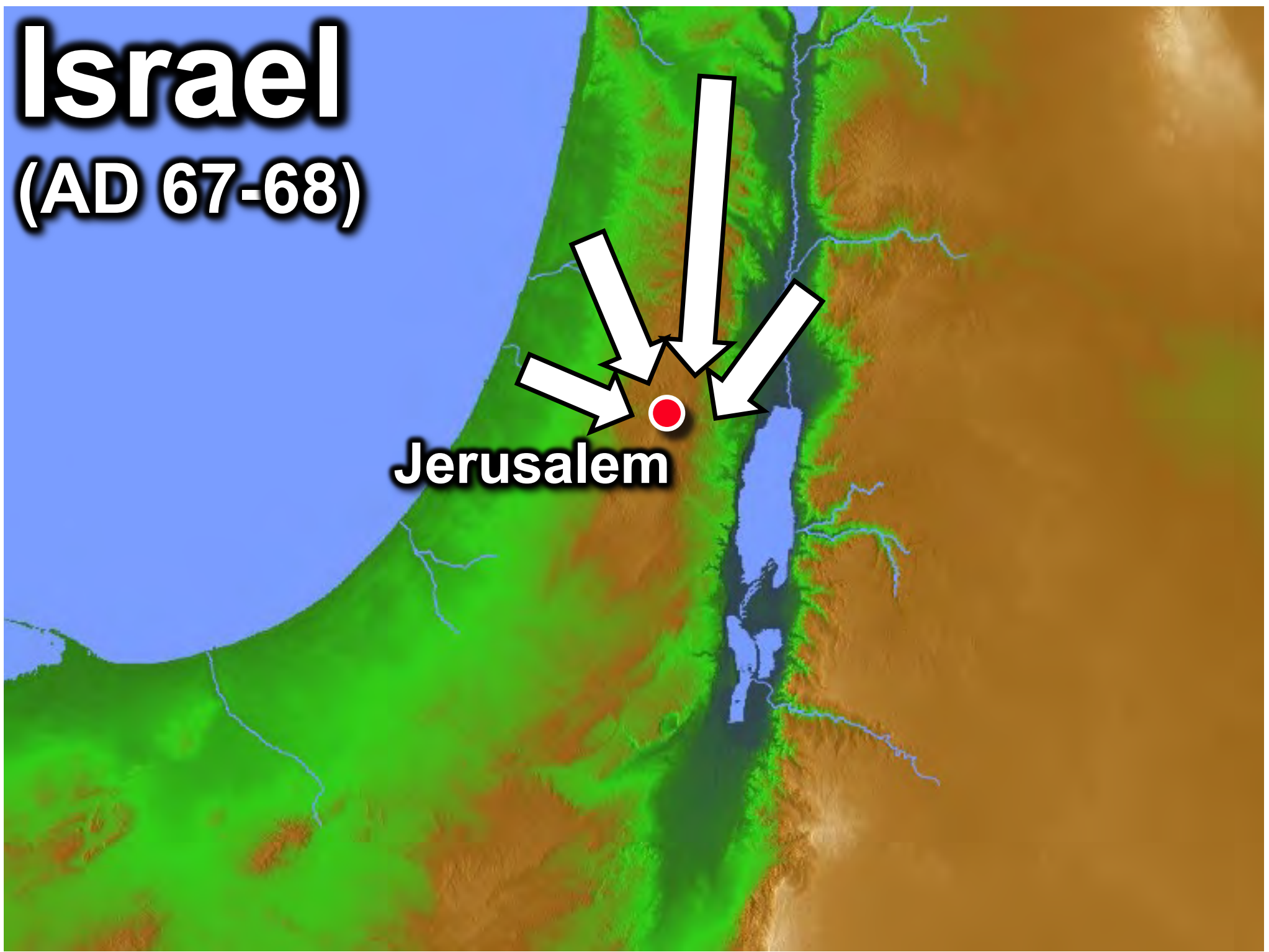
Rome

Israel

**I think they lived
in Israel**



Israel (AD 67-68)

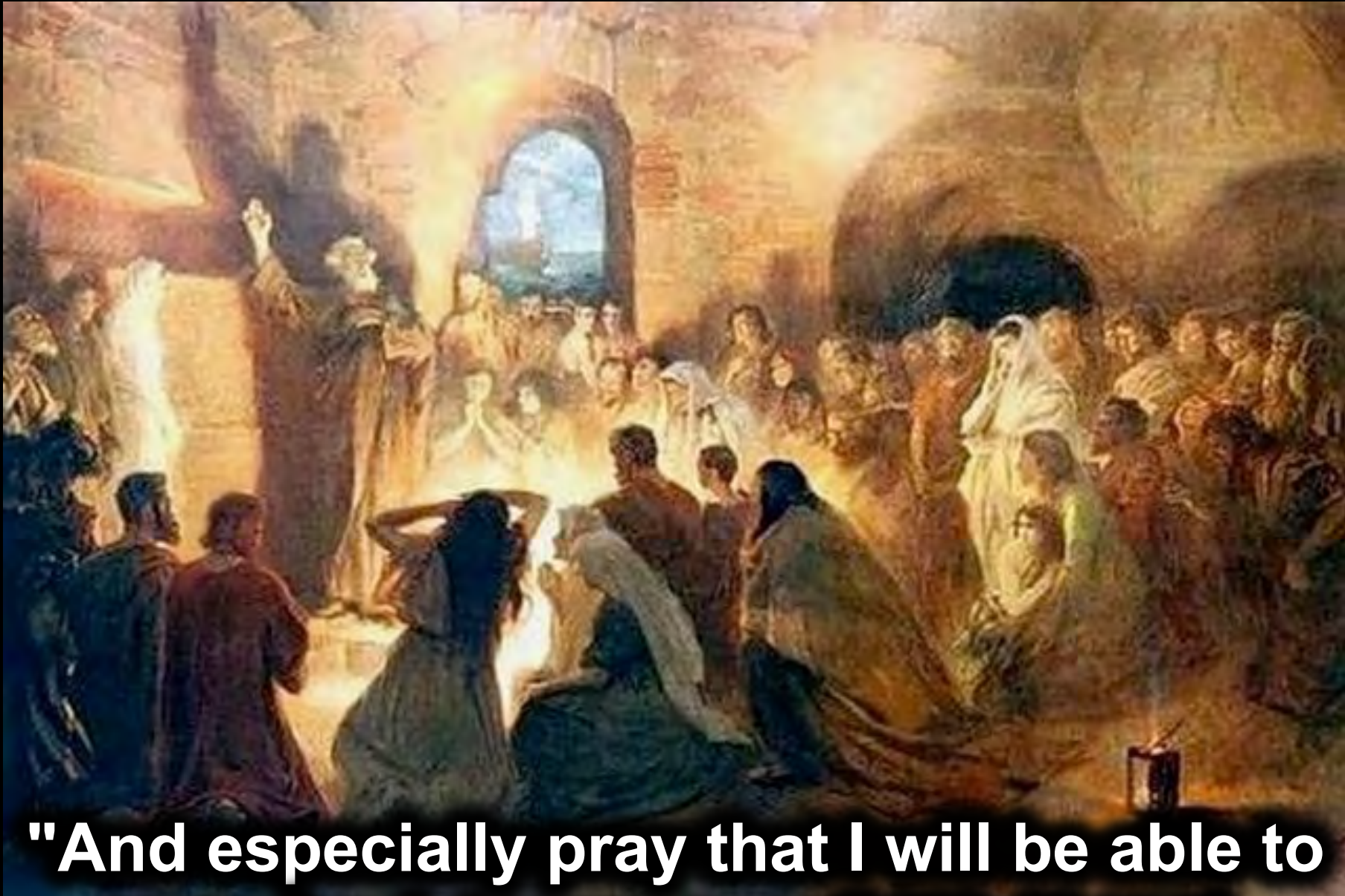


Jerusalem

**How do
we know
that the
readers
were
Jews?**



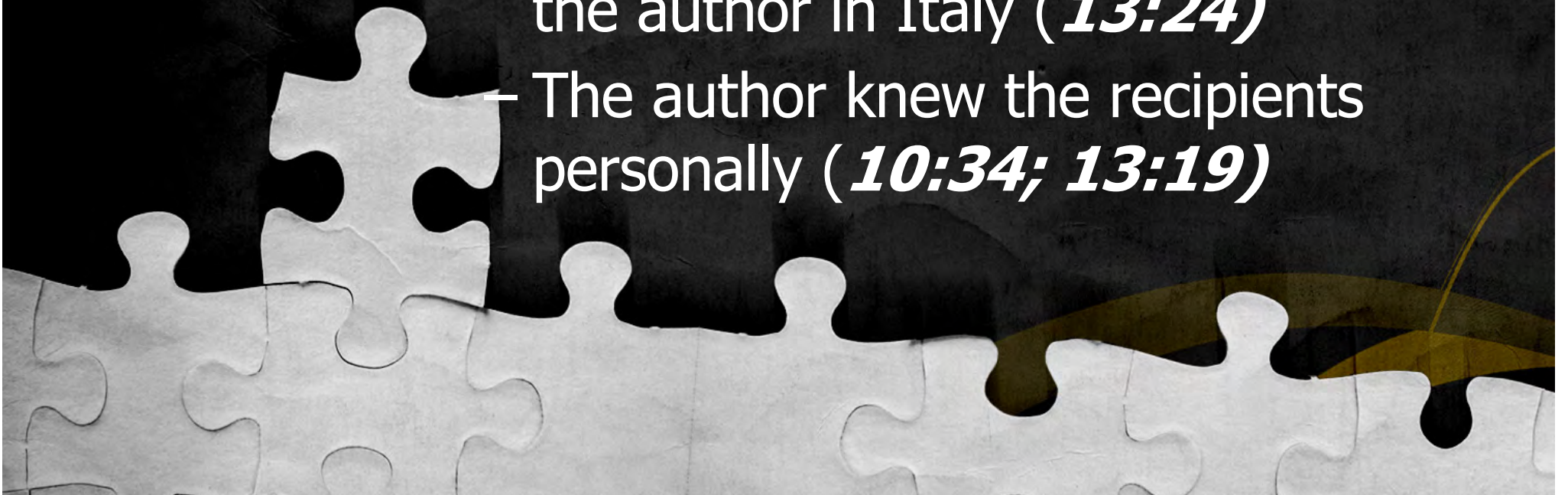
A Specific Jewish Community



"And especially pray that I will be able to come back to you soon" (13:19 NLT).

Review of the Background...

- The Recipients
 - Most see it as written to Jewish Christians.
 - No one knows where they were at the time of the writing.
 - Many see the recipients in Israel and the author in Italy (***13:24***)
 - The author knew the recipients personally (***10:34; 13:19***)



Hebrews uses the word "**better**" 13 times... 266f

1:4 Christ is "**better** than the angels"

6:9 We are confident of "**better** things in your case"

7:7 Melchizedek "**better**" ("greater") than Abraham

7:19 "We have confidence in a **better** hope"

7:22 Jesus is the "guarantee of a **better** covenant"

8:6 Christ is the "mediator of a **better** covenant"

8:6 New covenant "established on **better** promises"

9:23 Priestly garments need "**better** sacrifices"

10:34 Heaven a "**better** and lasting possession"

11:16 Heaven a "**better** country"

11:35 They obtain a "**better** resurrection" experience

11:40 God "provided something **better** for us"

12:24 Christ's blood is "**better** than the blood of Abel"

Note:

11:4 "Abel offered to God a **better** sacrifice" uses a different Greek word often translated "better"



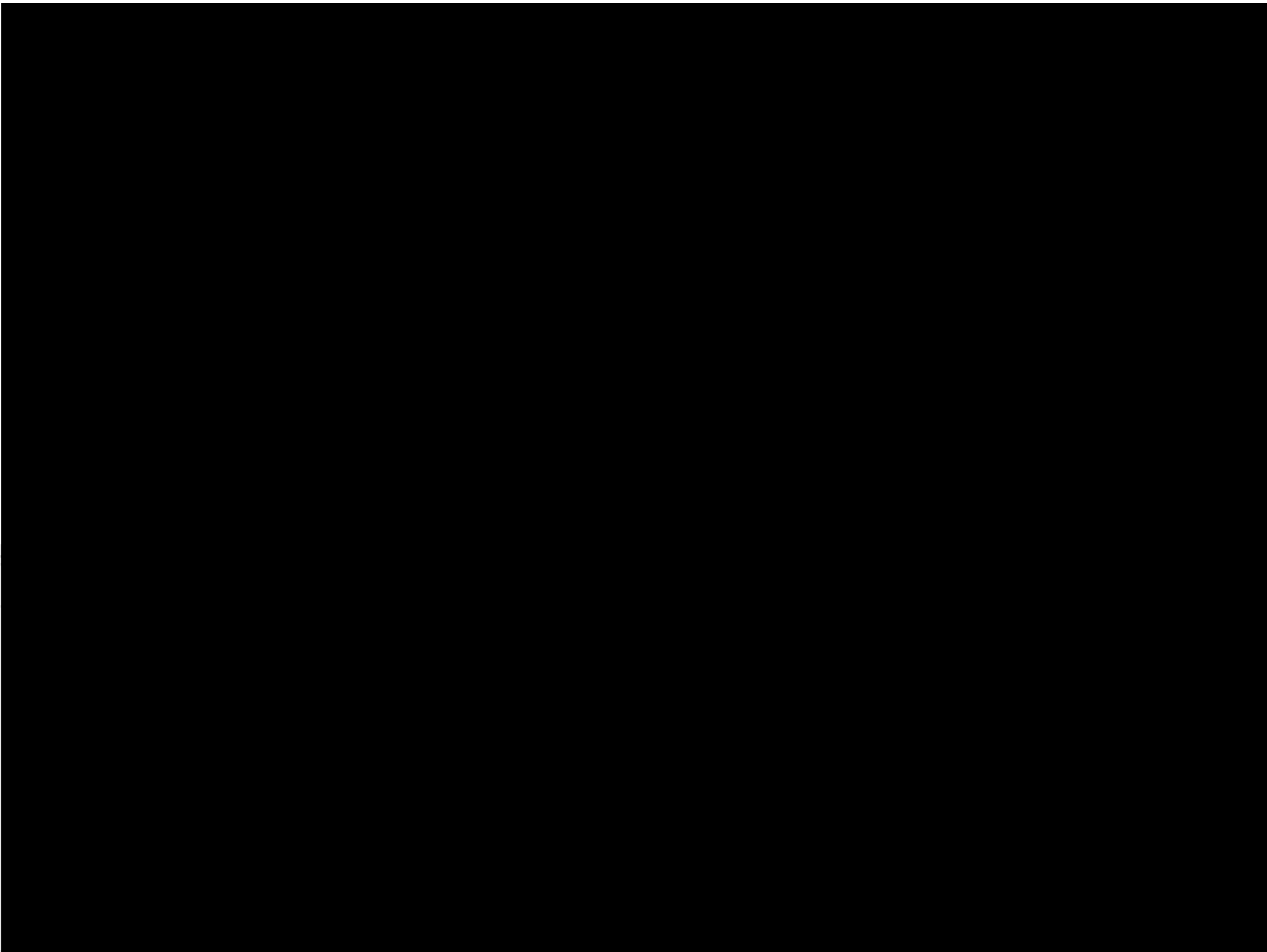
JESUS

IS

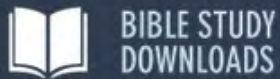
BETTER

The Supremacy of Christ

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS



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